

6 July 1966

Dear Bill,

Thank you very warmly for your letter of the 4th and for the clipping of the L.A. Times review of Inquest. Is it a spare or should I return it? I do have a press clipping service (sometimes I think it is more a customer clipping service) but they seem to miss quite a few articles and stories, so I am grateful to have this copy of what is one of the more enthusiastic and thoughtful reviews thus far of Ed's book. He usually phones me every day to exchange news and I will read this one to him as soon as he calls. Perhaps it will make up for his being called (by Cedric Belfrage in the National Guardian last week) a "promising halibut"!

The fact that you are withholding your own reaction to Inquest for the moment leads me to suspect that, like Maggie, Vincent Salandria, and a few others, your views are negative. For that, if it is so, I am truly sorry. I think the book makes such an overwhelming and vital contribution of wholly new and damning information—information which is really susceptible of only one interpretation, whatever euphemisms Ed or Rovee may use—that to carp about Ed's emotion or his failure to coincide exactly with one's own views is off balance and out of perspective. In Maggie's case, I know how utterly genuine her convictions and her reactions are; in the case of some of the other researchers, I know that there is some personal rancor and malice at the root. Everyone, I suppose, day-dreams occasionally about being "the" one to crack the case, or some such sophomoric fantasy.

I am not much of a compromiser. In my own book, I haven't the smallest iota of pity for the Commission or its lawyers, and I state bluntly that I consider that Oswald was framed, before and after 11/22/63. But I cannot impose my conclusions on anyone else who may stop short of what I regard as the ultimate truths about this dirty affair, when I know that he is well-motivated, has made a gigantic contribution to our knowledge of what went on behind the WC's closed doors, and single-handedly forced the reopening of responsible discussion of the WC. I am damned if I understand (this is entre nous, please) why, for example, Salandria writes a merciless review of Inquest and makes even worse insinuations about Epstein in private, yet is kowtowing admiringly around Fred Cook, who was even more vehement in his article in The Nation in ridiculing my suggestion that Oswald might not be guilty as charged and whose editors made their humble obeisance (from which Cook did not disassociate himself) to the honorable Commissioners. Nor is Salandria that much holier than Ed, since he has dedicated his published articles to such personalities as Connally, Kellerman, and FBI expert Frazier, if memory serves.

I am weary beyond words of the back-biting which has been going on in these parts (though not on the Coast, thank heavens) and I am sick of playing referee and conciliator (you would be amazed to know how much of my time that has been taking during the last few months). My one real concern is that we should work our way toward the truth, whatever it may be, with mutual help and mutual support against those who have committed or covered up the most ghastly crimes. Imagine spending one's energies on denigrating Epstein—or any other critic who is not an outright ruffian and self-seeker who stoops to theft and blackmail—when there is still such staggering work to be done!

My distress seems to have run away with me—I didn't intend to spend a whole page on the subject and certainly I am not aiming my remarks at you. In spite of what may appear to be an attempt to influence your views on Inquest, please do write me freely, whatever you feel about it, and I will be most interested and objective as I am able to be, as I know that there is no professional jealousy, so to speak, where you are concerned.

I appreciate very much indeed your generous remarks about my Heritage review. Several people seem not to have liked it, judging from their failure to make any comment, or their polite remarks. Actually, I can recall only one specific disappointment, and that was Leo Sauvage, for whom I have special admiration and considerable respect. The article was really my first published commentary on the case, the index hardly qualifying, and so perhaps I was hypersensitive—or vain—about it. So, believe me when I say how much your complimentary remarks reassure and gratify me. I don't know whether you have received the July/August issue of Minority of One; it has my review of Inquest and a fine editorial by Armond which pays a well-deserved tribute to people like Maggie Field and other researchers who have been laboring without reward against enormous odds, out of pure conviction and principle.

My manuscript—well, I am not sure. I keep adding odds and ends to it but in fact it has been "finished" for a long time. It is almost long enough for two separate books. Viking has twice suggested that they would like to look at it, when the present wave of excitement over Inquest has subsided; frankly, I suspect that they are being polite, a gesture in response to occasional help I was able to give them. Meanwhile, Armond seems to want to publish something on the case every month, and apparently wants to use some of the chapters from my manuscript (he has one of the three copies but is now out of the country for a few weeks; he had read three chapters before he left and was very excited about two of them, which he felt broke completely new ground). I am inclined to agree to that, in the hope that some publisher will then come to me, instead of my having to knock on doors. I am the world's worst salesman, whether for my own work or someone else (I tried to persuade one house to publish Weisberg's book last winter but I was a complete failure).

Bill, I have the month of August off, and there was a time when I would have planned to visit Maggie and my other un-met friends in California. However, she has been through such an ordeal that I dismissed the thought, feeling it would be too great a strain and imposition on her. God knows I would yearn to spend some time there. I haven't made any plans of any kind as yet. I know that wherever it may be it will be a "working" vacation—I think with sheer disbelief of such diversions as cruises, resorts, or sight-seeing. One possibility is that if I receive before August some microfilms I have ordered from the Archives, I will rent a viewer and work at home transcribing and studying them. I considered, and rejected, visiting Dallas. Though I would like to see the scene, with my own eyes. It is very good of you to offer your guest room. I will certainly think seriously about it, if it appears that Maggie is well enough by August to have a visitor who may tax her with marathon discussion of the evidence, etc.

I was amused and empathetic at your description of the telephone call to Harold Weisberg. It is always a monologue. He was dazed near paranoia for a while--feuding with Aronson, Salandria, Lusa in turn--and he has always acted like the ONLY critic and adversary of the NR. Although he has benefitted greatly by being in tandem with Inquest in so many stories and reviews (by itself, his book would have attracted very little coverage, if any), he takes the position that Inquest owes everything to his promotional efforts ("in competition with myself"); and he is still insanely preoccupied with the 72 or 86 publishers who turned him down, will go on and on and on for hours if you allow it.

As you say, I was not able to help Harold locate what he remembers so vaguely as remarks about body reaction to the impact of bullets. Not only do I have no recollection of it, neither have several of the other researchers whom I asked before sending a reply to Harold. It may well be that he read this in someone's article or book, not in the H & K.

I'm glad to hear that you are sending rapidly and will be filming again soon. Please tell me later on where I can see the series when it is on TV--if I don't have the pleasure of meeting you before then.

We monitored the Mike Wallace radio spot for a few weeks but never did hear Harold's interview; but last night, there was a full 20-minute interview of Epstein. Wallace is a fine questioner and although the interview started badly, and Epstein was audibly nervous, it picked up as it went along and in the end was a quite strong and persuasive attack on the NR. Ed did a very short and disappointing spot on the Today program last week, the least said the better.

Bill, my sincere thanks again, for all the generous and cordial things in your letter. It is wonderful to enjoy so much friendship from a stranger and it is surely mutual. Perhaps we will meet before the summer is out.

Sincerely yours,

Sylvia Meagher